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Community Interest Company No. 11987734

SAFEGUARDING/CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Name of Organisation: Empowering Equine CIC.

Venue/address for which policy applies: All venues

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Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy and Procedures

1. Introduction

This document outlines Empowering Equine's child protection / safeguarding policy. It applies to all adults, including volunteers working in or on behalf of the company.

Child protection is defined as safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children by: Protecting children from maltreatment; Preventing impairment of children's health or development; Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care: and Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Everyone working in, or for Empowering Equine, shares an objective to help keep children and young people safe by contributing to: Providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn and develop in education and therapeutic settings; Identifying children who may be in need of extra help, or are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and taking the appropriate action, working with other services as needed.

We will ensure that parents and our partner agencies are aware of our child protection policy by ensuring that it is displayed at our sites, by raising awareness at initial meetings with new clients and ensuring that it is on the Empowering Equine website.

2. Policy Aims

The aim of this policy is to outline how Empowering Equine will: Promote a positive ethos where children can learn, develop, feel secure and be safe. Prevent unsuitable people working with children and young people. Promote safe practice and challenge poor and unsafe practice. Identify instances in which there are grounds for concern about a child's welfare, and initiate or take appropriate action to keep them safe. Contribute to effective partnership working between parents and all those involved with providing services for children and young people.

The policy will be reviewed annually, unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an earlier date of review.

Context

This policy enables Empowering Equine to carry out our functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children under sections 175 and 157 of the Education Act (2002). The policy is in line with the following legislation and guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) Children Act 1989 and 2004, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019), Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (2015), Protection of Freedoms Act (2012)

The policy is consistent with Cheshire East Council Safeguarding Children web-based procedures which can be located on. Empowering Equine will adhere to the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children procedures (should a young person come from another local authority then the first point of call would be to contact the duty social care team or local safeguarding board for direction/guidance – see appendix 6).

Safeguarding the welfare of children is more than purely child protection; it should permeate all activity and functions. This policy therefore complements and supports a range of other company policies, such as, but not exclusively; Health and safety, Behaviour Policy, Providing first aid (see Health and Safety policy), Safer recruitment and selection, including single central record, Staff and associated facilitators behaviour (code of conduct), Complaints procedure, Information sharing

Principles

Safeguarding arrangements within Empowering Equine are underpinned by the 2 key

principles:

1. Everyone who comes in to contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. All staff and associated facilitators, trainees and volunteers have a responsibility and role to play to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Staff and associated facilitators members will maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff and associated facilitators will always act in the best interests of the child. Empowering Equine operates a client centred approach taking into account client's views and voices. The client's wishes and feelings will be taken into account when determining what action to take and services to provide to protect individual children through ensuring there are systems in place for clients to express their views and give feedback.
2. Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities of Staff and associated facilitators

All adults working in, or on behalf of Empowering Equine have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This includes:

Responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn and develop. To identify children who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer significant harm. All staff and associated facilitators than have a responsibility to take appropriate action, working with services as needed.

Staff and associated facilitators induction will include organisation vision, aspirations and expectation of all staff and associated facilitators as well as what is considered acceptable and what is not. They will also receive information about systems within Empowering Equine which support safeguarding. This includes the child protection/safeguarding policy, staff and associated facilitators behaviour policy (code of conduct) and the role of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) at Empowering Equine and the organisations we are working with.

All staff and associated facilitators will: Read and sign to say that they have read and understood Keeping Children Safe in Education: for School and College Staff and associated facilitators (part one) (2019). Receive safeguarding training which is regularly updated so they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to keep children safe.

We will engender the principle that safeguarding is 'everyone's responsibility'.

Roles and Responsibilities of Directors

The Directors have the responsibility to ensure that Empowering Equine complies with safeguarding duties under legislation. Safeguarding is a standing item at all management and staff and associated facilitators meetings.

The Directors will ensure that: Empowering Equine contributes to inter-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) by:

- Providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when low level or emerging needs of children are identified;
- Contributing to inter-agency support to children subject to child in need or child protection plans; and
- Allowing access for Children's Social Care to conduct or consider conducting an assessment.

Empowering Equine's safeguarding arrangements take into account procedures and practice of the local authority as part of the inter-agency safeguarding procedures set up by Cheshire East Council. This includes co-operation between partner agencies and providing information to the relevant safeguarding boards to allow it to perform its functions. Should a young person come from another local authority then the first point of call would be to contact the duty social care team or local safeguarding board for direction/guidance (see appendix 7). The Directors will liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (also known as Designated Officer) and partner agencies in event of any allegations of abuse made against the Management. There is an effective child protection policy which is consistent with CECP procedures, along with a staff and associated facilitators behaviour policy (code of conduct). This will be provided to all staff and associated facilitators on induction, will be updated annually and available on Empowering Equine' website.

All policies and procedure adopted by the Directors, particularly concerning referrals of suspected abuse and neglect, are followed by staff and associated facilitators. A member of the Management team is appointed to the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL); this will be explicit in the role holder's job description, have the appropriate authority and given time, funding, training, resources and support to fulfil their role effectively. The DSL will undergo training at a minimum every two years. The Management and other staff and associated facilitators will undergo child protection training regularly. Staff and associated facilitators training will be consistent with the CSCP and RBSCP guidance Training Pathways for Education Provider's. People who pose a risk of harm are prevented from working with children by:

- Adhering to statutory responsibilities to check staff and associated facilitators working with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for checks beyond what is required and ensuring volunteers are appropriately supervised.
- Having a written recruitment and selection policies and procedures in place.
- The presence of at least one person on any appointment panel who has undertaken safer recruitment training.

There are procedures in place to handle allegations of abuse against staff and associated facilitators and volunteers and that such allegations are referred to the LADO/Designed Officer at the local authority and that procedures are in place to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service when the criteria has been met. There are also procedures in place to handle allegations against other children. There are systems in place for children to express their views and feedback. Staff and associated facilitators will not agree confidentiality and will always act in the best interests of the child. There are appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from therapy or Equine Facilitated Learning (EFL), particularly on repeat occasions. Any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to safeguarding arrangements that are brought to their attention are addressed without delay.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Manager

The Manager will ensure that: The policies and procedures adopted by the Directors are fully implemented and followed by all staff and associated facilitators. Sufficient time and resources are allocated to enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and other staff and associated facilitators to discharge their responsibilities, including recording and monitoring safeguarding activities, taking part in strategy discussions, other inter-agency meetings and contributing to the assessment of children. All staff and associated facilitators and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice with regard to children, and concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner. The child's safety and welfare is addressed through the therapeutic work Education Welfare Staff and associated facilitators and Social Workers are informed immediately when a child who is looked after or subject to a child in need plan or a protection plan goes missing. They undertake appropriate training to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities effectively and keep this up-to-date.

The Roles and Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is a senior member of staff and associated facilitators who co-ordinates Empowering Equine safeguarding and child protection arrangements by providing advice and support to other staff and associated facilitators on child welfare and child protection matters, to take part in strategy meetings and inter-agency meetings – and /or to support other staff and associated facilitators to do so - and to contribute to the assessment of children.

The DSL liaises with the local authority and works with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). Where there are serious/complex needs or child protection concerns, this includes referrals to Children's Social Care. In exceptional circumstances, i.e. in an emergency or concern that appropriate action hasn't been taken, staff and associated facilitators members can speak directly to Children's Social Care.

Roles and Responsibilities of other Empowering Equine Staff and associated facilitators

Any concerns must be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

If staff and associated facilitators members are unsure they should always speak to the DSL to clarify the situation and agree if any action is needed. Staff and associated facilitators have a responsibility to record all concerns (using Empowering Equine's concerns form) and forward this to the DSL or their deputy. All staff and associated facilitators will work with the DSL and where appropriate support Social Workers to take decisions about individual children.

All staff and associated facilitators, including volunteers and temporary staff and associated facilitators must have an understanding of how Empowering Equine safeguards and promotes the welfare of children, including the Empowering Equine child protection policy, their role and responsibilities in this and how to report any concerns.

Empowering Equine staff and associated facilitators with specific safeguarding responsibilities

Name of Designated Safeguarding Lead: Sarah Birrane, Director and Manager.

3. Safe Environment – children are safe and feel safe

Empowering Equine adopts an open and accepting attitude towards children as part of our responsibility. Children, parents and staff and associated facilitators will be free to talk about any concerns and will see Empowering Equine as a safe place when there are difficulties. Children's and clients worries and fears will be taken seriously and children and clients are encouraged to seek help from staff and associated facilitators.

Empowering Equine will therefore ensure that:

- An ethos where children and clients feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened too, taken seriously and responded to appropriately is established and maintained.
- Children and clients are involved in the decision-making which affects them.
- Children and clients know that there are staff and associated facilitators whom they can approach if they are worried or have difficulties and Empowering Equine has well developed listening systems.
- Posters are displayed which detail contact numbers for appropriate support services and child protection helplines i.e. CECP and Childline.
- There is a clear written statement of the standards of behaviour and the boundaries of appropriate behaviour expected of staff and associated facilitators and clients (see behaviour policy) that is understood and endorsed by all.
- Positive and safe behaviour is encouraged among clients and staff and associated facilitators are alert to changes in child's or client's behaviour and recognise that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse.
- Effective working relationships are established with parents and colleagues from partner agencies.
- There is an awareness that personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some children lead to an increased risk of neglect and or abuse.
- Staff and associated facilitators are appropriately trained in safeguarding according to their roles and responsibilities, have regular opportunities for safeguarding briefings and records are kept of all training undertaken.
- Safer recruitment procedures are used to make sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff and associated facilitators (and volunteers) who work with children.
- Volunteers are appropriately supervised.
- Any groups using Empowering Equine' premises for the provision of services to children have their own safeguarding policies, or adopt Empowering Equine' policy, and have satisfactorily completed all appropriate checks.

Specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues.

We recognise that some children will be at increased risk of neglect and or abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept

that abuse happens, or who have a high level of tolerance in respect of neglect.

Any child may benefit from early help, but all staff and associated facilitators should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Is disabled and has specific additional needs;
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care plan);
- Is a young carer;
- Is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups;
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation;
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse;
- Has returned home to their family from care;
- Is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect;
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- Is a privately fostered child.

Special consideration, where possible, includes the provision of safeguarding information, resources and support services in community languages and accessible formats.

All staff and associated facilitators should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) put children in danger.

Children Missing Education (CME):

All Empowering Equine staff and associated facilitators should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding

possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff and associated facilitators should be aware of the client's, organisations or college's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from therapy or EFL, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

It is essential that all Empowering Equine staff and associated facilitators are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

Children with family members in prison: Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. NICCO provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

Child sexual exploitation: Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact: it can also occur through the use of technology. Like all forms of child sex abuse, child sexual exploitation:

- Can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex;
- Can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual;
- Can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and noncontact sexual activity;
- Can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both;
- Can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence;

- May occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media);
- Can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse;
- Is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse.

Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of child sexual exploitation:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant;
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late;
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Child criminal exploitation - county lines: Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered.

Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- Can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
- Can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years;
- Can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;
- Can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence;

- Can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults;
- Is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Serious violence All Empowering Equine staff and associated facilitators should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime.

These may include

- Increased absence from school,
- A change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- A significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries.
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

All Empowering Equine staff and associated facilitators should be aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to manage these. Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and its Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance

Domestic abuse:

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological;
- Physical;
- Sexual;